

# START SMART...

*The keys to safe  
teen driving*



## 3 Distractions and Driving

### ***Distracted drivers are dangerous drivers!***

Distracted drivers are dangerous drivers, and teenage drivers are more easily distracted than older drivers. Also, because of their inexperience, they don't react as well when they suddenly perceive a danger. Teens are also more susceptible to distraction-related crashes.

### ***What are the most common distractions for teens?***

- ✓ Teen passengers—*teens love to drive their friends around, but teen passengers can be very distracting—by socializing, by goofing around, or even by deliberately interfering with the driver.*
- ✓ Cell phones—*they are helpful in emergencies, but drivers who are dialing, talking, or texting on their phones can not have their full attention on their driving.*
- ✓ Adjusting the Radio—*teens enjoy their music, but manipulating the radio controls, such as changing CDs, is a prime cause of distraction for young drivers.*
- ✓ Intense moods—*we all get really happy or angry or sad at times, but these intense emotions distract drivers from the task of driving and can also cloud judgment.*
- ✓ Others—*reading maps, or eating in the car—anything that takes your attention from driving is a hazard.*

### ***Paying attention while driving is important!***

Driving conditions may change quickly, and even momentary lapses in attention may mean the difference between crashing and arriving safely. Especially for teens, these lapses can be FATAL.

### ***What can parents do?***

You can set clear expectations and rules about safe driving and minimizing distractions. Limit the number of teen passengers! You can also prohibit the use of cell phones or radios while the car is moving.



### ***Parents agree!***

Emphasizing safe driving and minimizing distractions ***helps protect your teen from unnecessary risk.***



### **AAA StartSmart Experiences**

*“Alyssa and Ryan, her younger brother, were arguing over who-knows-what when they were driving home from school.*

*Alyssa screeched to a halt when she saw the red light. Now she understands why it’s so important to pay constant attention to the road.”—Shirley*

**James, mother of 16-year-old Alyssa and 12-year-old Ryan**

*“We weren’t doing anything wrong. I passed the cell phone back to John and when I looked up, the car in front of me made a sudden stop. I just tapped his bumper.”—Alex, a*

**17-year-old junior**

*“When the policeman brought her home, he told me that Leslie was driving in a neighborhood with the music up really loud and kids hanging out the windows. I couldn’t believe she did that.”—Denise Gibb, mother of*

**16-year-old Leslie**



### ***StartSmart comments...***

Teenagers are easily distracted; they need extra emphasis on ALWAYS paying attention to their driving.

#### **BOTTOM LINE**

***Make sure your teen understands that you expect her/him to ALWAYS pay attention while driving.***

***Make  
sure your teen  
makes concentrating  
on driving the first  
priority!***

